

Remarks/Arguments

Reconsideration of this application is requested.

Request for Continued Examination

In response to the final Office Action mailed on January 5, 2005, a Request for Continued Examination is enclosed with this amendment.

Claim Status

Claims 11-22 were previously presented. Claims 11-16 and 18-22 are amended, and claim 17 is canceled. Accordingly, claims 11-16 and 18-22 are now pending.

Allowable Subject Matter

Claims 17 and 18 are indicated as allowable if rewritten in independent form. Claim 17 depends directly from independent claim 16. Claim 16 is amended to include all limitations of claim 17, and claim 17 is canceled. Claim 18 is amended to depend from claim 16. Accordingly, applicant submits that claims 16 and 18 are now in allowable form.

Claims 19-22 are amended to include limitations corresponding to the limitations of claim 17, and are therefore submitted to be in allowable form as well. Applicant notes that the amendments to claims 19-22 substantially correspond to the wording of claim 17, but have been modified as necessary to correspond with the wording of claims 19-22.

Claim Rejections – 35 USC 102 and 103

Claims 11-16, 21 and 22 are rejected under 35 USC 102(b) as anticipated by Ooishi (USPN 6,205,071). Claims 19 and 20 are rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as obvious over Ooishi.

As discussed above, claims 16 and 19-22 are amended to include the limitations of allowable claim 17. Thus, applicant submits that claims 16 and 19-22 are allowable for the same reasons as set forth with respect to claim 17.

Claims 11-15 are amended to clearly distinguish over Ooishi. The following limitation is added to each of claims 11-15:

...wherein the signal supply apparatus is determined to be good when the detected current value is below the specified current value, and wherein the signal supply apparatus is determined to be bad when the detected current value exceeds the specified current value.

Ooishi discloses a shorting circuit 450 in which switch circuits 456-458 are operated to equalize bit line isolation control signal BLIL and sense amplifier drive signals SE and SE1 to the same voltage level V_{ref4} . As stated by Ooishi:

More specifically, bit line isolation control signal BSIL at the level of boosted voltage V_{pp} is lowered, whereas the voltage level of sense amplifier drive signals SE and SE1 are increased from the level of the ground voltage. (col. 24, lines 6-9)

Thus, signal BSIL is always lowered, and SE and SE1 are always raised, to an equalized voltage level V_{ref4} . A signal supply apparatus is not determined to be good if the current value of BSIL, SE and SE1 is below a specified current value and bad if the current value of BSIL, SE and SE1 exceeds the specified current value, as is required by amended claims 11-15. Rather, BSIL is always lowered, and SE and SE1 are always raised, to an equalized voltage level V_{ref4} . Applicant submits that this disclosure of Ooishi cannot reasonably be said to correspond to the recitations of claims 11-15, as amended.

With respect to claims 12 and 14, applicant further notes that a *composite current consumption value* for a plurality of impedance conversion devices is compared to a specified current value to determine whether the signal supply apparatus is good or bad. As noted above, BSIL is always lowered, and SE and SE1 are always raised, to an equalized voltage level. There is no *composite* of the current values of these signals that is taken and compared to a specified value to determine whether a signal supply apparatus is good or bad.

Appl. No. 10/637,224
Amdt. Dated April 5, 2005
Reply to Office Action of January 5, 2005

Attorney Docket No. 81754.0098
Customer No. 26021

For these reasons, applicant submits that claims 11-16 and 19-22 are allowable over the art of record, and that the rejections under 35 USC 102 and 103 should be withdrawn.

Conclusion

This application is now believed to be in condition for allowance. The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned should any issues remain after entry of this amendment. Any fees due with this response, including the RCE fee, may be charged to our Deposit Account No. 50-1314.

Respectfully submitted,
HOGAN & HARTSON L.L.P.

Date: April 5, 2005

By: 

Troy M. Schmelzer
Registration No. 36,667
Attorney for Applicant(s)

500 South Grand Avenue, Suite 1900
Los Angeles, California 90071
Phone: 213-337-6700
Fax: 213-337-6701